

March 20, 2017

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans,

Over the past few years you may have heard us using phrases like, “safeguarding the integrity of GI Bill benefits” and “protecting our beneficiaries from bad actors,” – but what does this really mean? Unfortunately, not every school/institution out there has Veterans’ best interests in mind, so we have been working diligently to ensure that our GI Bill beneficiaries don’t fall victim to schools that employ fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive practices.

Just recently, we had a major “win” that we hope will set a precedent for the future:

As a result of a student complaint in our GI Bill Feedback System, the owners of the College of Beauty and Barber Culture in Chesapeake, Va., were sentenced to jail time and required to pay \$4.5 million in restitution. The school, which enrolled hundreds of Veterans since 2011, only had a handful pass their licensing exam. The investigation also revealed that many students did not receive the required hours of instruction, which contradicted information submitted to VA. More information about the case can be found [here](#).

We take our Veterans’ education benefits very seriously, which is why we encourage them to conduct thorough research before choosing a school. To assist them, VA is constantly updating the GI Bill [Comparison Tool](#) with the number of complaints a school receives, and we add caution flags highlighting important information such as investigations, settlements, accreditation issues, or financial issues.

GI Bill beneficiaries, family, and friends can play a part in helping keep schools honest. Reporting [Principles of Excellence](#) violations and fraudulent schools through [the GI Bill Feedback System](#) can help other Veterans and dependents to avoid bad actors and protect the integrity of the GI Bill education programs. Students can also call the [VA Office of the Inspector General](#) hotline at 1-800-488-8244. In both cases, it’s up to you if you want to provide contact information or remain anonymous.

We will continue to work hard to provide the most accurate and timely information to our beneficiaries. As we navigate these sometimes turbulent waters, we will remain dedicated to providing the best GI Bill experience possible for those who fought for us.

V/R,

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VA Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence (“I CARE”)